

Remarks

Claims 12-30 are new pending in this application. Applicant has amended claim 12 and presented new claims 21-30 to clarify the present invention. Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration of this application.

Applicant presents claims 21-30, which recite a device for treating and reducing stuttering with auditory feedback. Applicant previously cancelled claims directed to the device upon the allowance of claims 12-20. However, since the allowance has been subsequently withdrawn, Applicant represents claims directed to the device.

The Examiner rejected claims 12-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. patent 5,047,994 to Lenhardt et al. in view of U.S. patent 5,961,443 to Rastatter et al.

The combination of Lenhardt et al. and Rastatter et al. does not suggest the invention recited in claims 12 or 21 since, among other things, the combination does not suggest a method or device for treating and reducing stuttering with auditory feedback that preferentially picks up sound from a direction forward of a user while suppressing sound reception from directions other than the forward direction. Lenhardt et al. appears to suggest a typical bone-conducting hearing aid. Lenhardt et al. does not suggest feeding back to a user the user's own voice. At col. 4, lines 34-38, Lenhardt et al. suggests amplifying all sound received in a certain frequency range. Amplifying all sound in the frequency range does not suggest amplifying and feeding back to a user the user's own voice. Amplifying all sound in the frequency range would not help to treat

stuttering. Lenhardt et al. suggests receiving all sounds or at the most all sounds in a certain range.

Rastatter et al. also does not suggest a method or device for treating and reducing stuttering with auditory feedback that preferentially picks up sound from a direction forward of a user while suppressing sound reception from directions other than the forward direction. Rastatter et al. suggests an in the ear device for treating stuttering. Such devices are quite different from a bone conducting hearing aid, as described in the specification. At col. 5, lines 5-14, Rastatter et al. only suggests preventing sound from reaching an ear of the user by utilizing that, "generally fill[s] the concha of the ear." Such a device is quite contrary to the claimed invention and also contrary to Lenhardt et al., which suggests a bone-conducting hearing aid. Bone conducting hearing aids, such as Lenhardt et al. and conventional hearing aids, such as Rastatter et al. are different devices, are installed differently and operate differently. There is no suggestion in either reference to combine the references. In fact, due to the differences between the two types of devices, it would be contrary to the teachings of both references to combine them. Furthermore, due to the differences between the devices, their installation and operation, there it is not predictable that the combination would even function.

In view of the above, the references relied upon in the office action, whether considered alone or in combination, do not suggest patentable features of the claimed invention. Therefore, the references relied upon in the office action, whether considered alone or in combination, do not make the claimed invention obvious. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection based upon the cited references.

If an interview would advance the prosecution of this application, Applicant respectfully urges the Examiner to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The undersigned authorizes the Commissioner to charge fee insufficiency and credit overpayment associated with this communication to Deposit Account No. 22-0261.

Respectfully submitted,

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